Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

LITHOGRAPHY ❧ BY LOUIS PRANG ❧ THE INTRODUCTION TO THE CATALOGUE OF AN EXHIBIT OF LITHOGRAPHIC PRINTS HELD AT THE GROLIER CLUB, NEW YORK, IN MAY, 1896 ❧ REPUBLISHED BY PERMISSION

LITHOGRAPHY, the art of printing from stone, has reached its centenary age. This occurrence is well worthy of commemoration by holding a review of its achievements. The exhibition of prints to which this catalogue is to serve as a guide has been undertaken with that end in view, and, in spite of our isolation from the chief theatre of the early achievements in artistic lithography, enough will be found in the collection to make possible the tracing of the development of this important art from its infancy in Germany to our own latest home products.

The story of the invention of lithography, and of its inventor, Aloys Senefelder, has been told so often that a repetition seems trite, but the occasion appears to call for a condensed recital of the principal events in the history of the man whose memory we honor by our exhibition. This recital will reveal at the same time the steps taken to reach at last results so unexpected by him and so wonderful: unexpected, because when Senefelder began to experiment, in the search after an inexpensive mode of printing his own literary productions, he had no idea that he would finally invent a third printing process, entirely different from the two which were then the only ones known (intaglio and relief); wonderful, because in his time it would have been considered an impossibility to take an impression from a surface on which the design was neither in relief nor in intaglio. Such an undertaking would have been thought simply absurd, the scheme of an idle dreamer.

Aloys, the eldest son of Peter Senefelder, was born in Prague, the capital of Bohemia, November 6, 1771. His leaning was toward the dramatic arts, but his father prevailed upon him to study law. While a student of law, eighteen years of age, he wrote poetry and a play, "Der Mädchenkenner," which latter was most favorably received. A year later he lost his father, and, being the eldest of nine children, he had to relinguish his law studies and devote himself to the support of the family. His thoughts at first naturally turned to the dramatic arts, in which he had already achieved some success; and he put his whole energy into this field of work, acting in the double capacity of author and performer. Two years of this life was, however, enough to cool the ardor of his enthusiasm for the stage and the writing of plays alone continued to occupy his attention.

Copyright, 1896, by the Grolier Club.

Aloys's business talents were of the lowest order; he was poor and in debt throughout his life. The printing of his plays for publication was too expensive for his means, and he tried to become his own printer; but here again he found that the purchase of types required capital not within his reach and he was obliged to exert his ingenuity in order to devise or discover some substitute for types.

He began his experiments by etching on copperplate; and was led, for economy's sake, to practise the necessary reverse-writing on polished floor-tiles, which in Munich (where he then lived) consist of a close-grained limestone quarried in the neighboring town of Solenhofen. He observed that the acid used for etching copper would likewise bite stone, and that to correct any error a retouching ink was wanted. To this end he devised a compound of wax, soap, and lampblack, which he formed into sticks to be dissolved for use with pen or brush, as is done with india-ink. These sticks of retouching-ink formed the first and most important step toward the final invention of lithography. The special ingredients entering into their composition alone made the invention possible. The following incident, as told by himself, which bridged the chasm separating the old from the new art of printing, will make this plain.

It was in the year 1796 that his mother called on Aloys, busy with his experiments, to write a memorandum for linen to be delivered to the waiting washerwoman. Not a sheet of paper could be found; every scrap had been used for proofs, and besides, the writing ink was dried up. In this emergency he seized a stick of his retouching-ink and wrote the desired memorandum on one of the polished Solenhofen stone slabs which happened to be handy, intending to copy it on paper later. Preparing to clean his writing from the stone, the thought occurred to him to submit it to the action of diluted aquafortis and observe results. He found, as he had hoped and expected, that the acid acted rapidly on the stone all around his writing, and soon left this latter in sufficient relief to enable him to print therefrom as easily as from type.

This was the first printing from stone of which Senefelder then had any knowledge, and although true lithography as we know it to-day (that is, printing from a flat surface) was not evolved by him until two years later, he dates his invention from the time of this happy incident, as being the starting point for all his subsequent discoveries.

In the course of the application of his invention to practical purposes, Senefelder continually sought for means of lessening his labor and he found that by writing with his retouching-ink on gummed paper, and then transferring this writing from the paper to his stone, in the manner at present so well known, he could save the (to him) more difficult process of reverse-writing on the stone itself. In the course of this process he observed that, accidentally immersing such a gummed sheet of paper, covered with writing, in water on the surface of which there happened to be a few drops of oil, the oil was not absorbed by the paper, but accumulated on the writing, which, as we know, was done with a greasy substance. This observation, that oil was repelled by the moist surface of the gummed paper, but absorbed by the ink, was sufficient to lead him to grasp the principle and apply it to his stone slabs. Instead of etching his writing into relief, he simply treated it with acidulated gum solution, not of sufficient strength to act perceptibly on the stone. The result, in inking-up, met his highest expectation. As long as the stone was kept moist the blank parts repelled the fatty printing-ink, and the greasy writing or drawing could alone be charged. This discovery proved to be the foundation for all the various processes of lithography, or chemical printing, as Senefelder called it at the time.

The ingenuity and tireless energy displayed by Senefelder in his efforts to broaden the field of the application of his discovery to commercial and artistic purposes, to invent presses, tools, machinery, and to keep his head above water in the mean time, deserve our highest admiration. He was an inventor of the true type, never cowed by difficulties to overcome, always hopeful, always sanguine of success, and withal generous and open-handed to a fault.

Senefelder died February 24, 1834, after he had elaborated all the processes now in vogue except photo-lithography. He lived long enough to witness the introduction of his art into all the civilized countries of the globe; long enough to witness its highest artistic achievements in black and white, standards of perfection for all time to come.

It is to be remarked here that the invention could not have been made in any other country in the world, as Solenhofen, in Bavaria, alone furnishes that particular quality of limestone useful for lithography. It is only quite lately that quarries of a similar, though inferior, quality of this mineral have been opened in America.

Lithography is the most versatile of all known methods of reproduction. It will admit of flat even tints, and of tints gradated from the darkest shade to highest light, while it can equally as well imitate a crayon-drawing, a line-engraving, or a stipple-engraving. Add to this the latest discoveries in the application of photography to the preparation of printing plates, and the facilities which the process offers to color-printing, as well as to artistic expression in black and white, and we must admit that the genius of Senefelder has bequeathed to art and commerce an heirloom of incomparable value.

Germany, of course, profited first and most from Senefelder; next to it, France, England, and other European countries; but not least, our own United States, though latest in the field. France (where the process was first successfully introduced, in Paris, by the Comte de

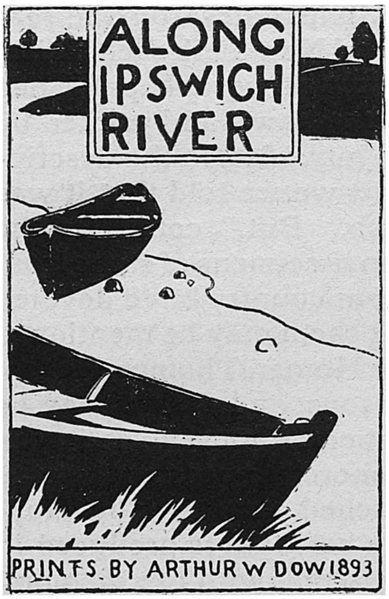
Lasteyrie in 1815, followed by Engelmann in the following year) has furnished the greatest number of artist lithographers, although Germany has proved not deficient in that direction— we need merely to mention the names of Strixner, Piloty, Adolph Menzel, Feckert, Kriehuber, and scores of others; but for brilliant work the French, considering their achievement as a whole, excel the Germans. The introduction of lithography into the United States dates from the year 1819, or even earlier, Boston, Philadelphia, and New York each claiming the honor of the first press. The earliest lithograph published in the United States is presumably the plate drawn and printed by Bass Otis for the "Analectic Magazine" for July, 1819. In the description accompanying this example of early art we are told that it was drawn upon a stone brought from Munich. "But," continues the writer, "the art has been successfully tried on specimens of stone from Frankfort, in Kentucky." Few painters of our country have devoted their genius to drawing on stone, but among them may be mentioned Rembrant Peale, J. Foxcroft Cole, Winslow Homer, Thomas Moran, etc., while Newsam, Sarony, Charles Parsons, and Baker may be named as prominent professional lithographers. Almost all the work done here is for industrial and purely commercial purposes, but the commercial product in this country has reached an artistic development which makes it certainly equal to the best that is produced in Europe; especially is this the case in dry etching with the diamond and in chromo-lithography.

The honor of the invention of chromo-lithography belongs, no doubt, to Senefelder himself, as in his work on lithography, published in 1818, he already employed prints in which he used color and speaks in this connection of the possibility of making fac-similes of oil-paintings. He thus published the idea and furnished the means by which to carry it out, requiring simply the cunning hand of the patient intelligent experimenter to gain, step by step, the present perfection.

So much for lithography as an item of general interest. For the details of the various processes employed by the craft, as etching, pen-drawing, crayon-drawing, wash- and stump-drawing, etc., we must refer those interested to the manuals on the practice of the art, of which a great number have been published.

The great revival in the art for true artistic expression now sweeping over Europe will, we hope, soon find an echo on the shores of the New World. That lithography is pre-eminently the handmaid of the artist who desires to see his work reproduced in the spirit as conceived by him, is proven by the work of the masters that has come to us from the past generation; and who can doubt, in examining the prints on exhibition, that for tone and color qualities, true to the artist's conceptions, it is unexcelled by any other of the reproductive processes? Lithography amply deserves the high place as the most facile medium for artistic expression and reproduction which it has been accorded by the foremost artists of a past generation, and which it is fast coming to be awarded again, after all other available mediums have had their turn. Let the artists heed the appeal.

PAINTING WITH WOODEN BLOCKS ❧ BY ARTHUR W. DOW ❧


ALONG IPSWICH RIVER
PRINTS BY ARTHUR W DOW 1893

Accompanying this number of Modern Art is a reproduction in colors of one of a set of ten prints forming a book entitled "Along Ipswich River." My intention was to make it purely a picture-book; not to represent any place, or any time of day, or season very realistically, but rather in an imaginative manner; to use some beautiful groupings of lines and shapes, chosen from the scenery of the old New England town, as a groundwork for different color-schemes, a pattern, so to speak, for a mosaic of hues and shades.

The method of printing, to be later described, permits this mosaic to be varied indefinitely in the same design during successive inkings of the blocks, hence no two books need be, or in fact can be, alike, either in color or sequence of illustrations. This possibility of variation, of search for new color harmonies, the constant surprises from unexpected changes of hue and effect, led me to adopt "wood-painting" as a means of expression.

The origin of the ideas which culminated in these prints can be traced to the observations and fancies of childhood.

Ipswich sailors have a habit of painting their boats in different colors from year to year; a yellow boat with a dark green stripe is likely to appear next season as a bright emerald green with a blue stripe, or a pure white, or lavender and gray. The flash of these colors on the blue river or purple mud flats, or in the faded salt grass of the shore, in ever-varying groups, impressed me peculiarly when a child. But more fascinating and more closely related to the work under discussion, were two copies of a spelling-book, "embellished with cuts," illustrating Aesop's Fables; engraved in an antique fashion—one set colored, the other plain. The unreality of the color—an old farmer in yellow, throwing stones at a green boy in a blue tree—added an imaginative charm to these pictures. The uncolored copy seen side by side with the other, emphasized its effect and suggested new combinations. A few other old hand-colored books were unearthed from chests in the garret, and the contemplation of this rude and primitive art afforded me a special kind of enjoyment, more fully satisfied in later years by Japanese prints.